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ther of passion or sentiment, being of course retained in the version. But, after all, there are two requisites, without which no successful translation of Welsh poetry, no more than of any other, can be expected: one is, that the translator should perfectly understand the original, and the other, that he should himself be a poet.

It may appear, after what has been now said, something like arrogance to offer here any of our old bardic productions in an English dress. But it forms a particular object of this publication, as expressed at the commencement of the present Essay, to enable English readers to form an accurate estimate of the value of our bardic remains. Consequently, the author of the translation, which will be found in a subsequent page, is willing to incur the imputation alluded to, if he should thereby be the means of stimulating others to achieve with greater success what he has attempted. Yet the attempt here made, however inferior in poetical merit to Gray's version of the same ode, will, it is hoped, be found to represent, with more fidelity, the sense and spirit of the original.

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## NOTICES OF OLD BOOKS.

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THE HISTORY OF THE GWEDIR \* FAMILY, *by* Sir JOHN WYNNE †, of GWEDIR, Knt. and Bart.

THIS little work having now become exceedingly rare ‡, it is presumed that a brief notice of it will prove no unacceptable present to the readers of the CAMBRO BRITON.

\* The true orthography is Gwydir. But the mode of spelling, used in the work, is retained in this and in some other instances.—Ed.

† Sir John Wynne was born of a noble and very ancient family in Caernarvonshire, in the year 1553: he was married to Sidney, daughter of Sir Wm. Gerrard, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, by whom he had nine sons and two daughters, a tolerably numerous progeny; but happy, says the Psalmist, is the man that hath his quiver full of them! He was created a Baronet in 1611, and died in 1626, in the 73d year of his age. The Baronetcy is now extinct, his male posterity having failed in the person of his grandson, Sir John Wynne; but some of the first families in the Principality claim alliance with, or descent from, him through female branches; as the Burrells, Lords Gwydir, (who are also representatives of the extinct Dukedom of Lancaster), the House of Wynstay, the Mostyns of Mostyn.—Yerke's "Royal Tribes of Wales," contains much curious information on this subject.

‡ "The History of the Gwedir Family" was first published in a small 8vo. volume, of somewhat less than 100 pages, by the Hon. Daines Barrington.

The intention of our author, in the compilation of this "History" of his Family, was to deduce his pedigree from Owain Gwynedd, who succeeded his father Gruffydd ab Cynan, to the throne of North Wales, about the middle of the 12th century, and in the prosecution of his design he seems to have spared neither labour, nor expence. So long, therefore, as his ancestors continued *Reguli* of that country\* (and "they were mighty men in their generations)," this tract, imperfect as it is, throws much valuable light upon its history; and that the information itself is authentic has, I believe, never been disputed. He had access to authorities consulted by no former historian of Wales†. In addition to Dr. Powell, he refers the reader, in his second page, to "the Welsh Chronicle" (which we are told in another place, was in the possession of Sir Thomas Williams of Trefriw), various Welsh Pedigrees, the records preserved in Caernarvon Castle, those contained in the tower (which latter, it seems, were copied for him by "Richard Broughton, Esq. Justice of North Wales, the chiefe antiquary of England," p. 365), beside the Latine book quoted in p. 368, and the traditions of the country.

But it is not as a document of public history only that this work is to be consulted; its most interesting feature, and that which constitutes its chief excellence, is the lively picture, which it furnishes of the manners of our ancestors during the period immediately following the subjugation of their country by the English Edward‡. Sir John Wynne wrote his history about the latter

ton (London, 1773): but this edition was speedily bought up, and, the work continuing to be in considerable request, it was reprinted in Mr. Barrington's "Miscellanies," (4to. London, 1781). The writer of this article some time since endeavoured to procure a copy of this work; and, after some month's unwearied search, at length found one, consisting merely of the "proof sheets" of the original edition, with all the *errata*, corrections of the press, &c. &c. The price of this book, or rather (such was its condition) of these leaves was fifteen shillings, and, the purchase having been deferred but one day, it found a purchaser at this exorbitant price! The references, therefore, of this article are made to the last Edition in Mr. Barrington's Miscellanies.

\* "God hath shewed such mercy to our kind," says Sir John, (p. 396.) "that ever since the time of Rodericke, the sonne of Owen Gwynedd, Lord of Anglesey, there lived in the Commonwealth, in eminent sorte, one or other of our name, and many together at times."

† Mr. Warrington wrote his excellent History of Wales long after the publication of this work, which he (as do Hume and Carte) frequently quotes. He is, I believe, still living.

‡ "Divina Providentia," says Edward, "terram Wallie cum incolis suis, prius nobis jure feudali subjectam, jam, sui gratiâ, in proprietatis nostre dominium totaliter & cum integritate convertit, & corone regni (Angliæ) predicti, tanquàm pars corporis ejusdem, annexuit et univit."—(Stat. Wall. xij Ed. I.) Had the Kings of England any feudal superiority over Wales:

end of the sixteenth century, at a period when his countrymen were already beginning to experience the benefits of their union with England \*, and when they had already in some degree lost that antipathy to the customs of their more polished neighbours, which had thrown them so far back in the scale of refinement.

Llewelyn ab Gruffydd, having taken part with Simon de Montfort and the disaffected nobility of England against Henry III. though included in the general accommodation made with the vanquished after the battle of Evesham, was naturally anxious for his future safety; and, when required to do homage to the new King, scrupled to put himself into the hands of his enemy, and demanded a safe conduct from the King and other terms: all of which, except the safe conduct, Edward thought proper to refuse, but, having obtained a fifteenth from the Parliament, marched against Llewelyn, who had taken refuge amongst the lofty hills of Snowdon, and there, blockading all the mountain passes, compelled the Prince to surrender at discretion. The terms imposed appear to have been religiously observed by the Welsh, until unable longer to support the insolent oppression of the English, they flew to arms, and thus gave Edward, what he so much desired, a plausible excuse for their entire subjection. Assembling, therefore, his military tenants, he marched into Wales, where Llewelyn being surprised and defeated by Mortimer, was slain with two thousand of his subjects: and Prince David, his Brother, after wandering about in various disguises for nearly two years, was at last betrayed into the hands of the English, sent in chains to Shrewsbury, and, having been tried by all the Peers of England, suffered death as a traitor, for defending by arms, the liberties of his country, together with his own hereditary authority†.

The union, however, of the two kingdoms was yet incomplete; and, to say the truth (observes Sir Edw. Coke ‡), this nation was never in quiet until King Henry VII., their own countryman, obtained the Crown. But it was reserved for his successor, Henry VIII. thoroughly to incorporate this brave people with the English by the statutes of the xxviith. xxxivth, and xxxvth years of his Reign, whereby considerable alterations are made in their internal polity, and the inhabitants put upon the same footing, and made fellow-citizens, with their conquerors: a generous mode of triumph (says Sir W. Blackstone), which the Republic of Rome

or was the feudal system ever known in that country? Mr. Barrington, (in his observations on Stat. Walliæ,) thinks not.

\* This was effected by Stat. 27 Henry VIII.

† Hume. ‡ Inst. 4. 239. § Vol. 1, p. 94.

practised with great success, till she reduced all Italy to her obedience by admitting the vanquished states to partake of the Roman privileges.

The interval, which elapsed between these important events, was a period of gloom and anarchy, and a period, which our regard for the memory of our ancestors would willingly consign to oblivion, but which our respect for historical truth compels us to pronounce most barbarous and disgraceful. "Soe bloody and ireful were quarrels in those days and the revenge of the sword at such libertie, that almost nothing was punished by law what-ever happened\*." Of this the fate of the *llawrudds*, mentioned in a subsequent extract, is one of the many examples; and even our author's own uncle (such was then the state of the country) "durst not go to church on a Sunday from his house of Penanmen, but he must leave the same guarded with men, and leave the doors sure barred and bolted, and a watchman to stand at the Garreg during divine service, being a rock whence he might see the church and the house and raise the crie if the house was assaulted. He durst not, although he were guarded with twenty tall archers, make known when he went to church or elsewhere, or goe or come the same way through the woodes and narrowe places, lest he should be layed for; this was in the beginning of his time †."

In the course of his narrative the author relates more than one of those unhappy feuds, which so frequently agitated the country. I regret, that the limits of the CAMBRO-BRITON will allow room for but one, but that a very remarkable instance.

"The beginning of the quarrel and unkindness between Ievan ap Robert and Howell ap Rys ap Howell Vaughan," says Sir John, p. 403 et seq. "grew in this sort. Ievan ap Robert, after his sister's death, upon some mislike, left the company of Howel ap Rys, and accompanied John ap Meredith, his nephew, and his children, who were at continual hate with Howel ap Rys. . . . Howel ap Rys ap Howel sent a brother of his to lodge over night at Keselgyfarch, to understand which way Ievan ap Robert ap Meredith meant to go the next day, who was determined to shoot a match with John ap Meredith's children at Llanviangel y Pen-nant (near Beddcelert), not far from John ap Meredith's house. This being understood, the spie, Howel ap Rys his brother, slips away in the night, and lets his brother know where he should

\* P. 395. † Probably in the reign of Henry VIII.—P. 427.

lay (wait) for him. Now had Howel ap Rys provided a butcher for the purpose that should have murdered him; for he had direction by Howel to keepe himselfe free, not to undertake any of the company until he saw them in a medley, and every man fighting. Then was his charge to come behind the tallest man in the company (for otherwise he knew him not, being a stranger), and to knocke him down. For Howel ap Rys said; ‘thou shalt soon discerne him from the rest by his stature; and he will make way before him. There is a foster brother of his, one Robin ap Inco, a little fellow, that useth to match him behind, take heed of him; for be the encountre never soe hot, his eye is ever on his foster brother.’ Ievan ap Robert, according as he was appointed, went that morning with his ordinary company towards Llanvihangel to meet John ap Meredith. You are to understand, that in those dayes and in that wide worlde every man stood upon his guard, and went not abroad but in sort, and soe armed as if he was in the field to encountre with his enemies . . . , Howel ap Rys and company, within a while, overtooke Ievan ap Robert and his followers, who turned head upon them, though greatlie overmatched. The bickering grew very hott, and many were knocked downe of either side. In the end, when that should be performed, which they came for, the murthuring butcher having not stricke one stroake all day, but watching of opportunity, and, finding the company more scattered than at first from Ievan ap Robert, thrust himself among Ievan ap Robert’s people behinde, and, making a blow at him, was prevented by Robin ap Inco, his foster brother, and knocked down, God bringing upon his own head the destruction that he meant for another; which Howel ap Rys perceiving, cried to his people, ‘Let us away and begone, for I had given chardge that Robin ap Inko should have been better looked to.’

“It fortunèd anon after, that the Parson of Llanvrothen took a child of Ievan ap Robert’s to foster, which sore grieved Howel Vaughan’s wife, her husband haveing then more land in that parish than Ievan ap Robert had; in revenge whereof she plotted the death of the said Parson in this manner. She sent a woman to aske lodgeing of the Parson, who used not to deny any. The woman being in bed after midnight began to strike and to rave; whereupon the Parson, thinking that she had been distracted, awakeing out of his sleepe, and, wondering at so suddaine a crie in the night, made towards her, and his household also; then she said, that he would have ravished her, and threatned

revenge to the Parson. This woman had her brethren, three notable rogues of the crew, fit for any mischief, being followers of Howel ap Rys. In a morning these brethren watched the Parson, as he went to look to his cattle in a place in that parish called Gogo yr Llechwin, and there murdered him; and two of them fled into Chirckeland in Denbighshire to some of the Trevors, who were friends or of a kinne to Howel ap Rys or his wyfe. It was the manner in those days, that the murtherer onely and he that gave the deathe's wound should flie, which was called in Welsh *llawrudd*, which is a red hand, because he had blooded his hand. The accessaries and abettors of the murtherers were never hearkened after. . . .” “Ievan ap Robert, going to his friends the Kyffins of Chirckeland, caught the two *llawrudds*, but the latter advised him not to convey them out of the country, as he wished, by reason that the faction of the Trevors would lay the way and narrow passages of the country; and, if they were brought to Chirke castle gate, to receive the tryall of the country lawes, it was lawfull for the offender's friends, whosoever they were, to bring 5l. for every man for a fine to the Lord to acquit him\*, so it were not in cases of treason. Thereupon Ievan ap Robert ap Meredith commanded one of his men to strike off their heads, which the fellow doing faintly, the offender told him, that, if he laid his neck under his sworde, he would make his sword take a better edge than he did; whereupon Ievan ap Robert, in a rage, stepping to them, struck off their heads.” P. 408.

To conclude: the quaint style of our author, his religious veneration for every circumstance connected with his ancestors, and his excessive patriotism render this curious work highly entertaining. And I think I may safely venture to recommend it to the attention, not only of the professed antiquary, but of every Welshman, who takes any interest in the manners of his forefathers †.

London, Jan. 1, 1820.

OTTIS.

\* According to the Laws of Hywel Dda, the compensations for murder varied, with the degrees of relationship, from one pound to seven pence halfpenny, that is from the first to the sixth degree. And their compensations were to be paid within a fortnight from the time of the murder, if the murderer remained in the country.—Ed.

† The learned Dr. Percy (afterwards Bp. of Dromore), perused this work with great attention, and added, (besides several valuable notes), four genealogical tables illustrative of this history, all of which, together with several notes by Mr. Barrington, and Mr. Evan Evans, are published in the Edition printed in Mr. Barrington's Miscellanies.